

Nature Towns and Cities



Accreditation Criteria Launch

10am, Tuesday 28 January, 2024



National Trust



Heritage
Fund



Who will you hear from today



Emily Boig,
Senior Officer, Connecting People
with Nature, Natural England



Victoria Bradford-Keegan,
Delivery Director, Nature Towns
and Cities



Janna Bloice,
Project Manager for Parks,
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council



Andrew Burford,
Principle Adviser, Green Finance and
Investment, Natural England



Drew Bannellick,
Head of Land, Sea and Nature Policy,
National Lottery Heritage Fund

Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation

The Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation criteria has now been published on the website. Partnerships will be able to apply for their town or city to become accredited from late March 2025. It is free to apply and open to all urban areas.

How does it help towns and cities?

- Strengthens and formalises partnership working under one shared vision – being a Nature Town or City
- Demonstrates a place has the right foundations in place to deliver transformational change
- Benchmarks best practice and progress
- Provides external recognition to boost the urban nature agenda internally and externally
- Provides assurance to potential investors and funders that a town or city is a good investment or funding opportunity
- Repositions green infrastructure as vital for the long-term success and resilience of a town or city



Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation criteria

The full criteria are available at: www.naturetownsandcities.org.uk/accreditation



Setting your vision

Bring partners and stakeholders together to create a coherent and clear, ambitious vision for the future of the place.



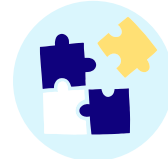
Building strong partnerships

Build on existing partnerships and create new partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders through which you can bring the vision to life.



Writing your GI Strategy and improvement planning

Create a strategic plan to improve green and blue infrastructure in the area based on the shared vision.



Developing your projects

Move your Green Infrastructure Strategy and vision into delivery by developing a detailed pipeline of investable projects.



Creating your business case for funding or investment

Make the case for investment or funding in your place to deliver your vision and pipeline of projects.



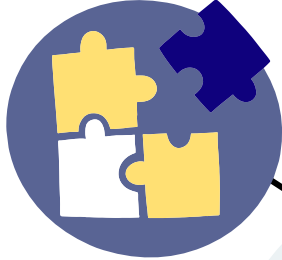
Developing your operating model and financial planning

Develop your target operating model to deliver and manage the change - how will you partner with and empower communities? Develop your proposed blended finance model to support your ambitions.

Suggested evidence



Suggested evidence



DEVELOPING YOUR PROJECTS

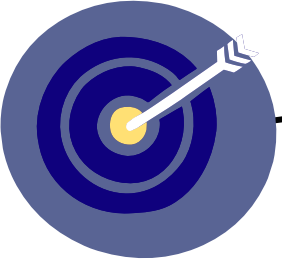
evidence of your proposed projects - pipeline of partly or fully costed project plans, evidence of co-design, expected outcomes, timeline of project delivery, approach to monitoring and evaluating and learning from change



LEVEL TWO ADVANCED

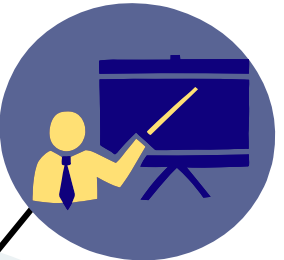
TARGET OPERATIONAL & FINANCIAL MODEL

evidence of your new operational model – overview of your operating model, detail of your proposed blended finance model, workforce development strategy, evidence of your proposed legal or governance structure, long-term financial plan and cash flow forecast, funding plans, partnership plans, capacity building plans and approach to empowering local communities, risk management process, process for review and evaluation



BUSINESS CASE FOR FUNDING OR INVESTMENT

evidence of your business case - your overall business case including the strategic rationale, expected benefits and ROI, risks and mitigating actions and financial justification for the proposed changes, a Funding or Investment Strategy, your approach to ring-fencing income and reinvestment



What support will be available?

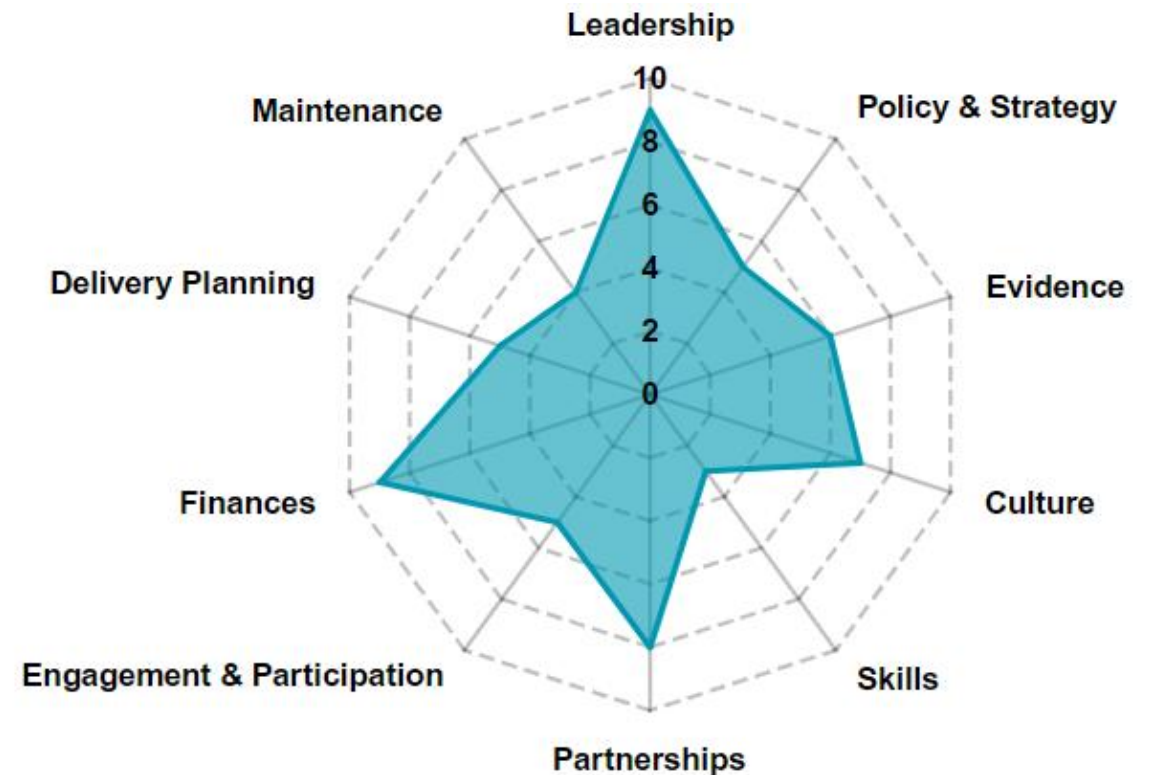
- Learning resources, tools, templates and case studies
- Group learning and peer mentoring
- Regular themed webinars
- Monthly online accreditation surgeries
- Capacity building grant
- Area team support and expertise

Sign up to the newsletter for all the latest



The Self-Evaluation Tool

- Interactive tool to help places assess their readiness to lead for change, taking ambitious, place-wide action on green and blue infrastructure for people, place and nature
- Low bar to entry, optional and not formally assessed
- Contains quantitative metrics, qualitative enablers and a framework for a reflective session to explore the town or city's priorities
- Offers a detailed perspective on a place's strengths and areas for improvement
- Useful to facilitate partner conversations
- Encourages places to start their journey to accreditation



The Self-Evaluation Tool

The Self-Evaluation Tool is available as an interactive Excel and downloadable PDF.

It is being developed into an interactive online tool which will be ready in Spring 2025.

1. LEADERSHIP

This is about understanding the level of leadership and support for the development of GI. Strong leadership can drive vision and strategy, fostering a culture that values and prioritises nature and GI at the urban scale. It also sets the long-term ambition, which can influence strategic decisions and resource allocation.

1.1 Within your local authority, how would you evaluate the current level of ambition for place-wide change that benefits people, place and nature?

- a. **Poor.** Support from senior leadership is limited.
- b. **Average.** There is some support, but it's limited to individual projects and the agenda is sometimes overshadowed by competing priorities.
- c. **Excellent.** The senior leadership team fully supports plans for ambitious place-wide change.
- d. I don't know.

1.2 Does the local authority currently have a senior leader (officer or politician) who is an active sponsor or champion for GI (or similar) at a town or city scale?

- a. **No.** There is no senior leader who actively champions ambitious place-wide change for GI.
- b. **Yes.** There is at least one individual in the senior leadership team who is focused on developing an aspect of GI.
- c. **Yes.** Several members of the senior leadership team are focused on the holistic development of
- d. I don't know.

1.3 How would you rate the long-term (10-20 years) thinking for GI in your urban area?

- a. **Low.** There isn't a long-term view.
- b. **Moderate.** The senior leadership team has a balanced approach to the future of GI, neither neglecting it nor making it a primary focus.
- c. **High.** There is a long-term plan that is bought into, and people are empowered and leading for
- d. I don't know.

LEADERSHIP TOTAL

6

Nature Towns and Cities accreditation, our approach and what it means in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

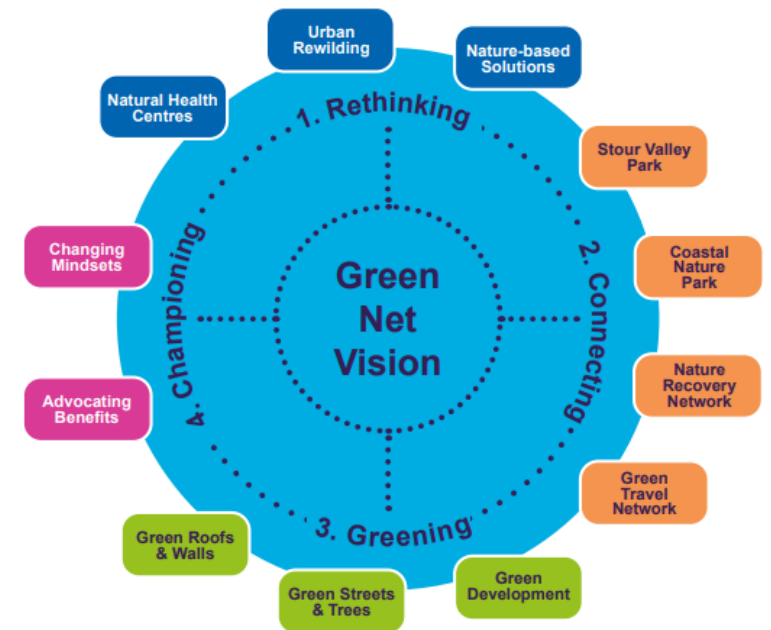
We've been part of the Future Parks family since 2019, a forerunner to Nature Towns and Cities.

One of our major workstreams was developing a vision, goals, delivery principles and ambitions for our service

Creating our **Green Infrastructure Strategy**.

We've realised the value of championing green infrastructure, Nature Towns and Cities accreditation will help with that.

Tells everyone we are serious about nature, are they?



Accreditation, why ?

1. Is it accreditation as a label that will help us or the fact that we've gone through the steps that the accreditation framework suggests ?
2. Foundation level – understanding your place, your stakeholders and creating a plan for improvement. It's a solid place for any greenspace service to start.
3. Strategic and evidence base.
4. Straight forward criteria for self-assessment
- Accreditation workbook.



Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation: Level 1 Foundation

	Notes explaining how the criteria have been met	Links	Can we apply for Foundation Accreditation now?	What would it take to apply for Foundation - time and work?	Queries
Setting your vision					
1. Have you thought holistically about the change this vision could bring, considering the big challenges the place needs to address, the opportunities for transformation and the rationale?					
2. Have you identified and secured the support of key sponsors within your organisations and other key bodies who will champion and lead for the change?					
3. Is the vision ambitious and will lead to the delivery of transformational outcomes for the place?					
4. Have you co-developed the vision with relevant people and groups from the community, businesses and organisations?					
5. Have you involved the wider public to understand their priorities and interests, making sure to be inclusive and reach new audiences?					

Panel Q&A

**Please use the Q&A box
function to submit questions
to the panel**



Nature Towns and Cities Network Workshop:

Help us understand how to build and maintain a thriving Nature Towns and Cities Network! Ahead of its launch, we are running an open workshop to hear what you want to see in the Network on Thursday, 13 February 2025. Email our delivery partners hello@irisandbirch.co if you'd like to find out more and get involved.

Newsletter:

Sign up to the mailing list to be the first to hear more information about the programme including resources and events via the website: naturetownsandcities.org.uk

Contact us:

If you would like to get in touch with us directly about accreditation, please email: info@naturetownsandcities.org.uk